

CHAPTEE

V. 1815.

Message from the Tuileries — My interview with the King — My appointment to the office of Prefect of the Police — Council at the Tuileries — Order for arrests — Fouché's escape — Davoust unmolested — Conversation with M. de Blacas — The intercepted letter, and time lost — Evident understanding between Murat and Napoleon — Plans laid at Elba — My departure from Paris — The post-master of Fins — My arrival at Lille — Louis XVIII. detained an hour at the gates — His Majesty obliged to leave France — My departure for Hamburg — The Due de Berri at Brussels.

THOSE who opposed the execution of the treaty concluded with Napoleon at the time of his abdication were guilty of a great error, for they afforded him a fair pretext for leaving the island of Elba.¹ The details of that extraordinary enterprise are known to every one, and I shall not repeat what has been told over and over again.² For my own part,

¹ The island of Elba appears to have been (at least publicly) suggested by Marshal Ney. It is said that Bonaparte originally demanded Corfu, which was refused as too valuable a possession, under the ludicrous pretext that his residence there *might disturb the tranquillity of Turkey!* The island to which he was sent united every property which Bonaparte could have desired for new plans of ambition. Its small size and population disarmed jealousy, and gave it the appearance of a mere retreat. It contained an impregnable fortress, capable of being defended by a handful of faithful soldiers. It was within a few hours' sail of the coast of Italy, even then dreading the yoke of her old masters. Through Italy and Switzerland communications with the French army might be opened through unexpected channels, and in the long line of the Alps and the Jura, it was scarcely possible to intercept them. The distance from the coast of France somewhat diminished the facility of watching the port, and he was near enough to Provence for such a sudden enterprise as his situation allowed. If the globe had "been searched for that residence in which Napoleon was most dangerous to France all sagacious searchers must have pointed to Elba. — *Editor of 1836 edition.*

² In 1815 it was customary and convenient to treat Napoleon's return from Elba as a breach of faith justifying his eventual removal to St. Helena and making him an outlaw. All the petty but rankling annoyances inflicted on him, such as denying to the man who had made kings any higher title than that of General, were supposed to be justified by this act of his. It is now certain that when Napoleon left Elba he knew that his removal to St. Helena or some similar and detestable residence was practically determined on. Further, the Bourbons, by withholding the pensions due to him and his family, not only had broken the treaty with him, but had made it difficult for him to maintain himself in his little State. The determination not to pay